



NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

930 East 50th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60615
Phone: (773) 373-3366 * Fax: (773) 373-3571

**National Headquarters
Community Services
International Trade Bureau
LaSalle Street Project**
930 East 50th Street
Chicago, IL 60615
Phone: (773) 373-3366
Fax: (773) 373-3571

**Public Policy Institute &
Telecommunications Project**
727 15th St. NW
Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 393-7874
Fax: (202) 393-1495

Wall Street Project
5 Hanover Square
2nd Floor
New York, NY 10004
Phone: (212) 425-7874
Fax: (212) 968-1412

Entertainment Project
1313 8th Street
Suite 232
Los Angeles, CA 90019
Phone: (323) 734-3900
Fax: (323) 734-3913

Technology Project
560 20th Street
Oakland, CA 94612
Phone: (510) 869-2202
Fax: (510) 763-2680

Peachtree Street Project
Herndon Plaza
100 Auburn Avenue
Suite 101
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: (404) 525-5663 or 5668
Fax: (404) 525-5233

Automotive Project
First National Building
660 Woodward Avenue
Suite 1433
Detroit, MI 48226
Phone: (313) 963-9005
Fax: (313) 963-9012

Energy Science Project
2616 South Loop West
Suite 100 C
Houston, TX 77054
Phone: (713) 432-0209
Fax: (713) 218-7072

April 15, 2011

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: Lifeline and Link-Up Reform and Modernization; CC Docket
No. 96-45, Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service; and WC
Docket No. 03-109, Lifeline and Link-Up**

Dear Chair Genachowski and Members Copps, McDowell, Clyburn and
Baker:

I write this letter to you today urging your strongest support for continuing and strengthening the Lifeline Assistance and Link-Up America programs funded by the Universal Service Fund (USF). I am responding to the FCC request for comments regarding proposed changes to the Universal Service Fund, specifically those changes that would affect the Lifeline Assistance and Link-Up programs which provide telecommunications access to low-income Americans.

My organization and I are opposed to capping the funds from the USF for the Lifeline and Link-Up programs when, at present, only 32% of those eligible for the programs' services are receiving them. Placing a cap on the Lifeline and Link-Up programs at current levels will exclude and shut out the remaining 68% of eligible low income Americans. They will never have access to these programs designed to improve their lives.

Additionally, we ask that you reject proposals that would create barriers such as additional documentation for access to the services. The current FCC proposed rule that would eliminate the option of the subscriber self-certifying eligibility and require all low income Americans to present proof of receiving government benefits before enrolling for Lifeline and Link-Up will discourage poor Americans from applying. Requiring eligible low income Americans to produce proof of government benefits in advance of obtaining desperately needed service is not only a violation of their privacy, but also creates an additional hurdle or barrier to overcome to obtain Lifeline and Link-Up benefits in the worst U.S. economy since the depression.

Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr., *Founder & President*
Martin L. King, *Chairman*
www.rainbowpush.org

In addition, we urge that the Link-Up portion of the program be maintained. Eliminating or placing undue restrictions on the definitions of the Link-Up feature of the program or causing subscribers to pay out-of-pocket up-front fees to participate runs counter to what the program is designed to do. Proposed FCC rules denying access to Link-Up to telephone companies that predominately service low income Americans with Lifeline and Link-Up *because* the company focuses on providing services primarily to low income families is unfair and should not be allowed. This is particularly true when these companies are providing service to low income Americans who in the past have had difficulty obtaining Lifeline and Link-Up services due to a lack of competition in the marketplace.

The program's landline Lifeline and Link-Up services have been available for years. But cellular communication has taken on greater prominence because of its effectiveness in today's mobile society. Low-income individuals have specific needs and challenges regarding housing, safety and education, and the maintenance of this program will continue to provide them with the communication tools they need to deal with them.

Participation must be increased and not challenged. On this, the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War, no digital divide should exist for any people in our nation. Voice communication access must be maintained in addition to making all forms of digital communication a practical reality for all citizens.

I urge you to maintain the Lifeline Assistance and Link-Up programs under the USF. I stand ready to assist in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jesse L. Jackson, Sr." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.
Founder and President
Rainbow PUSH Coalition

Cc:

Michael J. Copps, Commissioner, Michael.Copps@fcc.gov
Robert M. McDowell, Commissioner, Robert.Mcdowell@fcc.gov
Mignon Clyburn, Commissioner, Mignon.Clyburn@fcc.gov
Meredith Attwell Baker, Commissioner, Meredith.Baker@fcc.gov
Kimberly Scardino, Telecommunications Access Policy Division
Charles Tyler, Telecommunications Access Policy Division
James Bradford Ramsay, NARUC